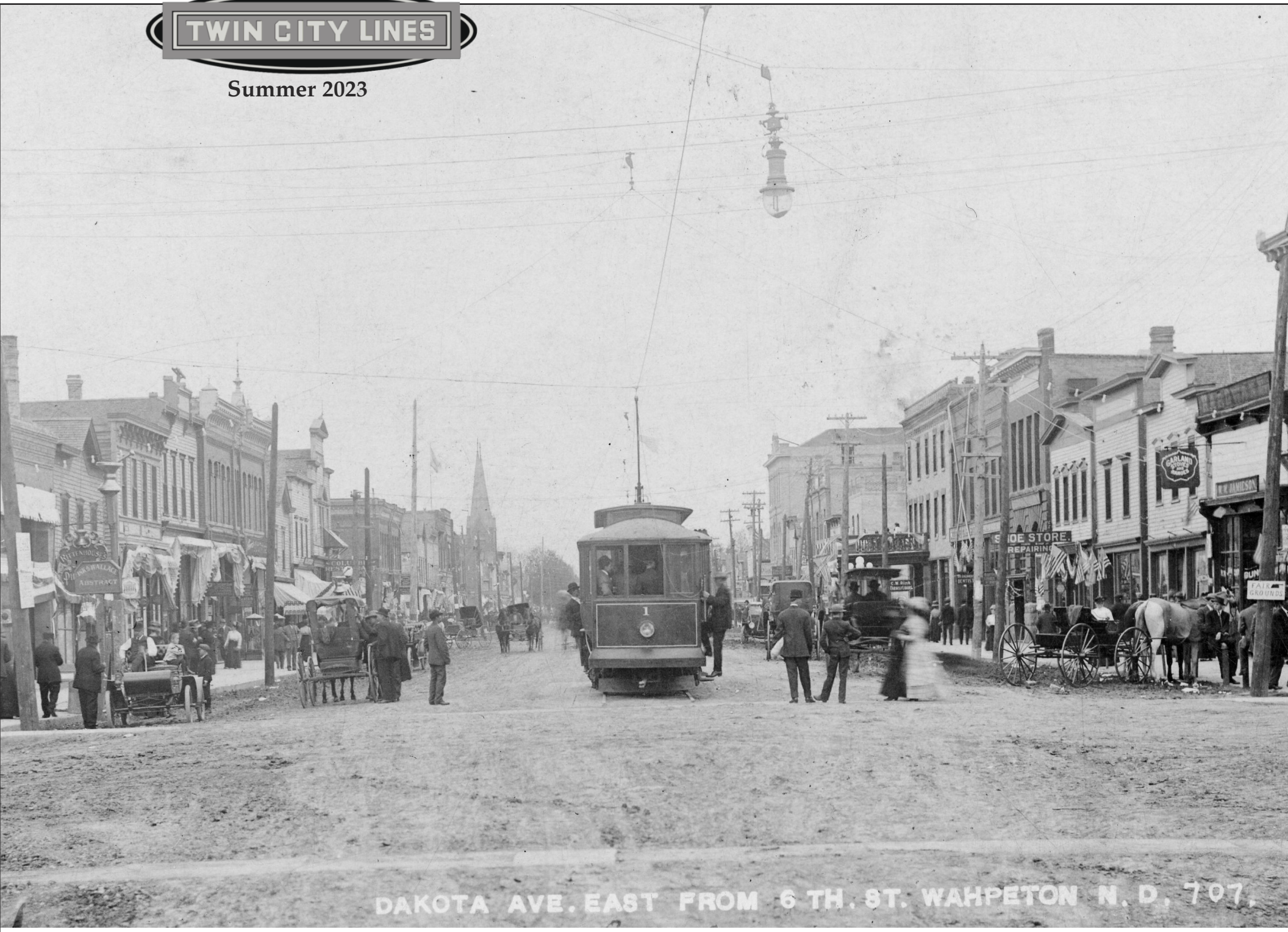
TWIN CITY LINES

Summer 2023



A streetcar passes the intersection of Minnesota Avenue and 5th Street in downtown Breckenridge. In the foreground are the tracks of the Great Northern. Wilkin County Historical Society collection.

Twin City Lines is published quarterly by the

Minnesota Streetcar Museum

P. O. Box 16509
Minneapolis, MN 55416

www.trolleyride.org
Vol. 17 No. 3
Aaron Isaacs, Editor
3816 Vincent Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55410
612-231-8989
aaronmona@aol.com

Twin City Lines is published quarterly and is mailed to members in good standing without charge under Third Class postal permit.

The Minnesota Streetcar Museum operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in Minneapolis and the Excelsior Streetcar Line in Excelsior. Its mission is to preserve Minnesota's electric railway heritage.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS and OFFICERS

Chair	**Aaron Isaacs**
Vice-Chair	**Dave French**
Secretary	**James A. Vaitkunas**
Treasurer	**David Downs**

John Dillery **Ben Franske**
Karen Kertzman **Darel Leipold**
Elaine Love

Bruce Gustafson, General Superintendent
Todd Bender, Excelsior Superintendent

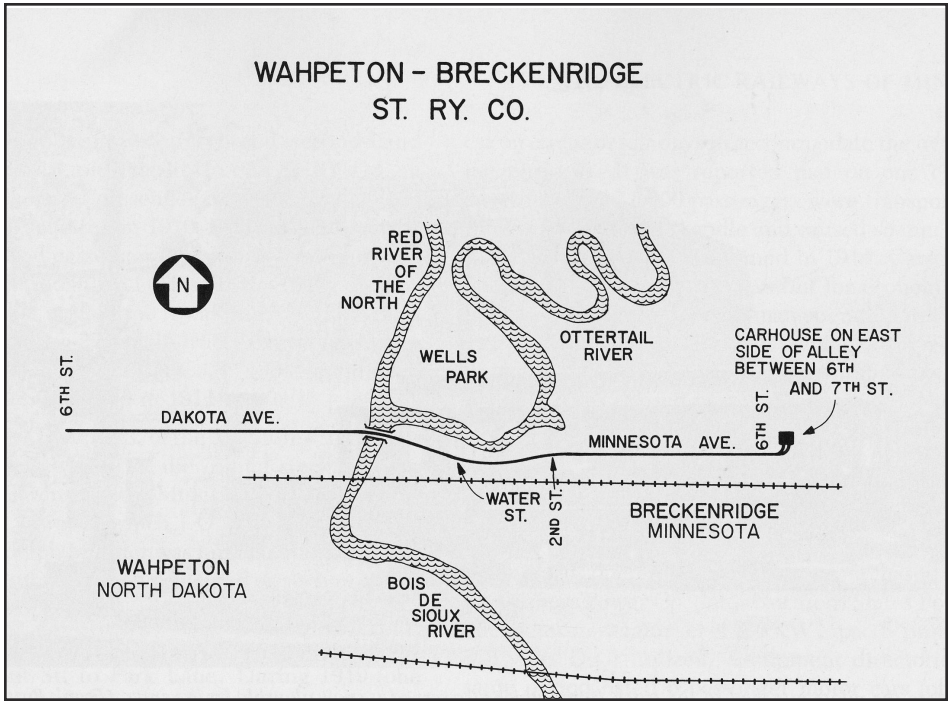
The Wahpeton-Breckenridge Street Railway

-Griffin Lawrence

When thinking of Twin Cities and streetcars, we all think of TCRT and their enormous network. But there is another set of twin cities that had a street railway that unfortunately, didn't stand the test of time. Breckenridge, Minnesota and Wahpeton, North Dakota are towns located about 40 miles south of Fargo and separated by the Bois de Sioux River. They were hubs for both the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railways, and now, BNSF. Despite their small 1910 populations (Breckenridge 1840; Wahpeton 2467) a street railway was installed, becoming the shortest interstate in American history.

Talks of a street railway connecting the two cities began in 1909 and $25,000 was invested to start it. A single track was laid and operations began on August 30, 1910. The line was only 1.14 miles long with about half in each state. The car house was located on Minnesota Ave. between 6th and 7th Streets in Breckenridge.

Only two cars, numbers 1 and 2, served Wahpeton-Breckenridge. They were built by the McGuire-Cummings Manufacturing Co. in Paris, Illinois in 1895 (#1) and 1896 (#2). They first operated for the Chicago City Railroad as cars 1907 (#1) and 2161 (#2) before later being re-numbered to 2307 (#1) and 2323 (#2). The cars made their way to the Wahpeton-Breckenridge in 1910 where they spent the remainder of their lives. They were single truck, 30 foot long, enclosed cars similar to our car #78 at ESL.



Starting at the Breckenridge car house, the line went down Minnesota Ave. through downtown Breckenridge, and crossed the bridge into North Dakota. It continued down Dakota Ave. through downtown Wahpeton before ending at 6th St. and reversing back. Only one car ran on most days. On busy days, especially Sundays, two cars would run. A siding was built by the American Legion Pavilion in Breckenridge to allow the cars to pass each other. Seven days a week the car would start its day at 6 A.M. and return to the car house at 11 P.M.

The line made good profits in its early years. According to a 1999 history, daily rides in 1912 averaged 748. Riders would get to the railyards, the downtowns, movies, school, and home all on the streetcar. North Dakota went dry in 1889 but Minnesota never fully banned alcohol. Wahpeton residents would pile into the car after the sun went down to visit one of Breckenridge's 11 saloons.

We've never seen a timetable for the line, so its frequency is open to speculation and the history sources are contradictory. A newspaper story from 1973 says a round trip took 20 minutes. A 1999 history says the regular frequency was every 30 minutes, doubling to every 15 minutes on busy nights and Sundays when both cars were used. It's important to remember that this was the era of the six day work week, so weekend activities were concentrated on Sunday. Sunday

Front cover: Minnesota's shortest street railway had only a single mile of track. It crossed the state line to connect Breckenridge with Wahpeton, North Dakota. The two towns' combined population of about 5000 somehow sustained the line for 15 years. No other city of less than 10,000 achieved that longevity. This is the Wahpeton end of the line at 6th and Dakota.

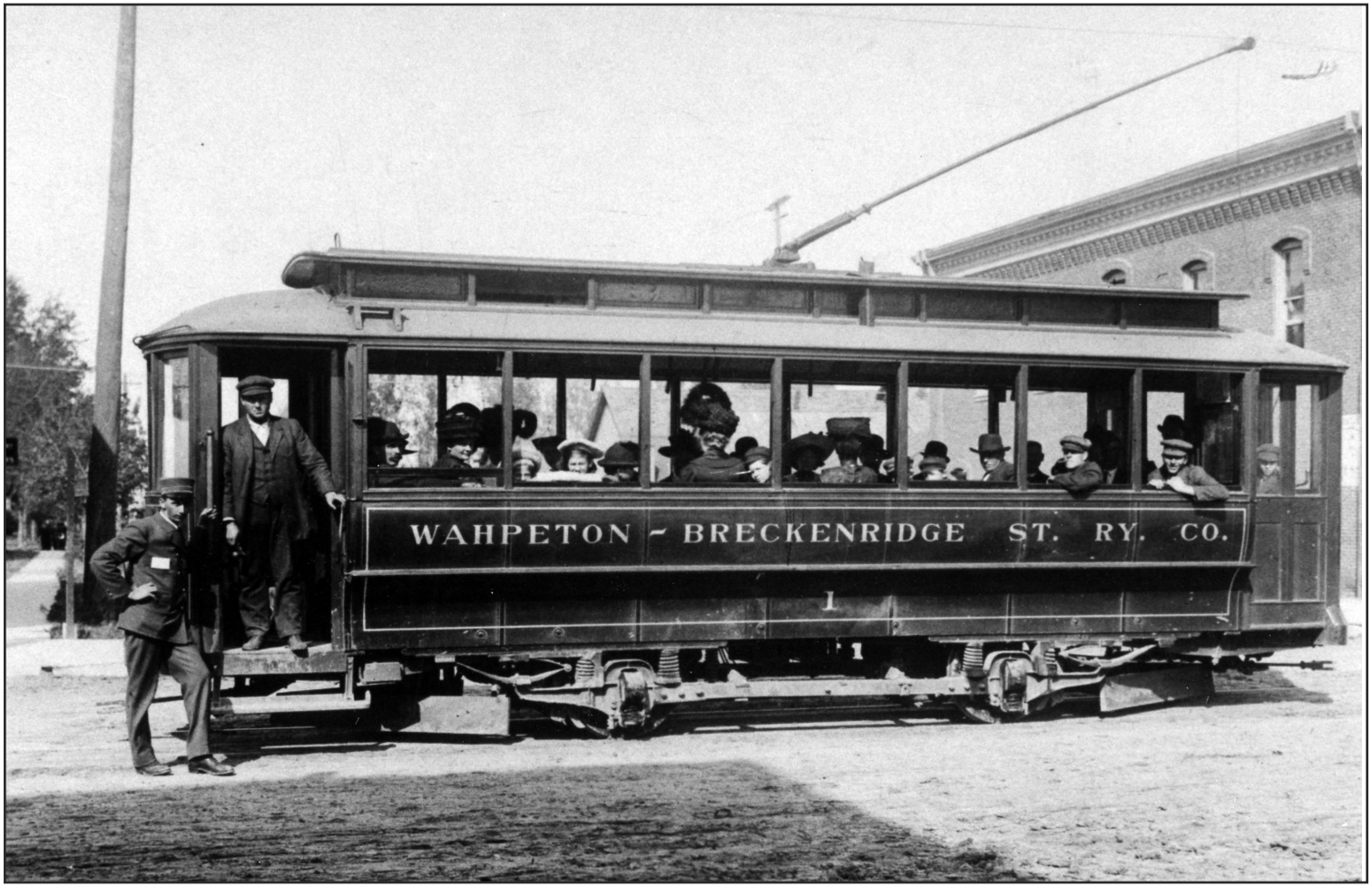
movies were banned in Wahpeton, but not in Breckenridge.

Being so short, the Wahpeton-Breckenridge had to compete with walking and biking. An average pedestrian could walk between the towns in 20 minutes, so why wait for a car on a 30-minute frequency? To attract ridership the schedule had to be reasonably frequent, with easy to remember departure times. Perhaps our own Como-Harriet Streetcar Line offers a useful comparison. Both are roughly the same length, 1.14 miles compared to .86 miles at CHSL. The cars run at similar speeds (15-20 mph). CHSL averages a trip about every 20 minutes, but probably spends more time waiting at the depot, giving end of the line talks. So the question is whether Wahpeton-Breckenridge ran every 15 or 20 minutes. It was important for the schedule to be easy to remember. A 20-minute schedule would leave from Breckenridge at 00, 20 and 40 after the hour; 10, 30 and 50 from Wahpeton. A 15-minute schedule (00, 15, 30, 45 from Breckenridge) would be an awkward 7, 22, 39 and 54 from Wahpeton. The crew would never get a decent break, so the frequency was probably 20 minutes.

The line charged a 5 cent fare, raised in the 1920s to 7 cents. The 1973 story says a single fare bought a round trip, which seems feasible given the short length of the line.

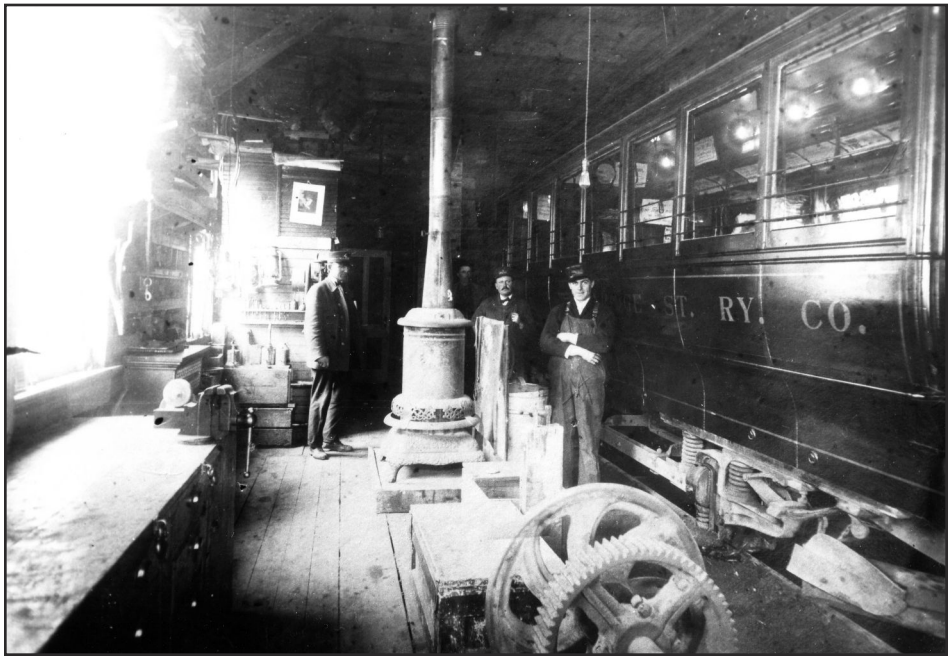
As it did everywhere else, by 1920 automobile competition was cutting into ridership. In 1921, the company faced a $25,000 expense for street paving and track replacement. This money was never raised and the Wahpeton-Breckenridge Street Railway Company filed for bankruptcy in 1922. The last streetcar arrived in Breckenridge, Minnesota at 11 P.M. on March 31st, 1925.

Not much remains of the United States' shortest interstate. The overhead was taken down and cars scrapped. The tracks in Wahpeton were removed and the ones in Breckenridge were paved over. The 6th Street car house was converted to a garage, but the tracks entering it were still visible in 1999. The garage was taken down and replaced with an Econo Foods and parking lot. The power source also stood for a while after the streetcars stopped running. The 400-volt power supply was described as a "box on a pole" located on the corner of Dakota Avenue and 2nd Street in Wahpeton. It must have remained standing until at least 1973 because of an article stating its presence. Today, the pole is no longer there and a Subway restaurant has taken its place. A memorial was installed along with other memorials commemorating different aspects of Breckenridge's rail history. The memorial has a plaque that gives a brief history of the line as well as pieces of rail gathered from a Breckenridge street repaving project. To this day, the two cities are railroad hubs. But like most small and rural towns in the country, the only public transportation is an on-call van service for seniors and handicapped.



Passengers and crew pose aboard car 1 at 4th Street in downtown Wahpeton. Richland County Historical Society collection.

Above: We'll follow the line from east to west, starting at the carbarn at 6th Street in Breckenridge. It survived into the 1990s, when this photo was taken. Aaron Isaacs photo.
Below: The streetcar is leaving the east end of the line at 6th Street, in front of the First National Bank. The banner on the car says "Dance Tonight". Minnesota Historical Society collection.



Above: This is the only known interior photo of the carbarn.
Below: The south side of Minnesota Avenue was (and still is) all railroad land. This must be a later photo because a safety fender has been added to the car and the decorative pin striping is gone. Richland County Historical Society collection.

Left: This posed view is at 5th Street in Breckenridge.
Below left: When ridership justified it, two cars would operate a 10-minute frequency. They met at a passing siding at the line's mid-point. The hand lettered ad on the car says "Base Ball Today". Wilkin County Historical Society collection.

Below right: The interstate bridge over the Bois des Sioux River. Eastbound cars ran against the flow of traffic.

Above: This looks like a charter or special movement of some sort. Wilkin County Historical Society collection.
Below: Looking west on Dakota Avenue at 3rd Street. Richland County Historical Society collection.

Above: An eastbound car at 4th Street in Wahpeton.
Below: Passengers exit the car at 5th Street in Wahpeton. Both Richland County Historical Society collection.

Backdating car 1239

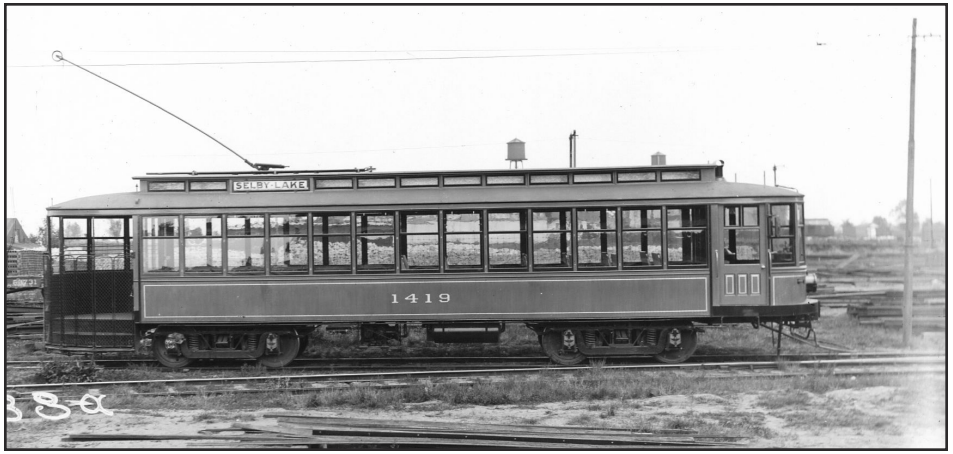
-Aaron Isaacs

Car 1239 is in its second round of restoration, designed to finish the work that began in 1999. The goal is to bring the car as close as possible to its 1921 appearance. When our museum acquired 1239, it was a stripped body that had been made into a cabin at Big Lake, MN. Built in 1907, it was one of the last series of cars to come out of the 31st Street Shops before they were closed and construction transferred to the new Snelling Shops. Car 1300 is one of Snelling's first products.

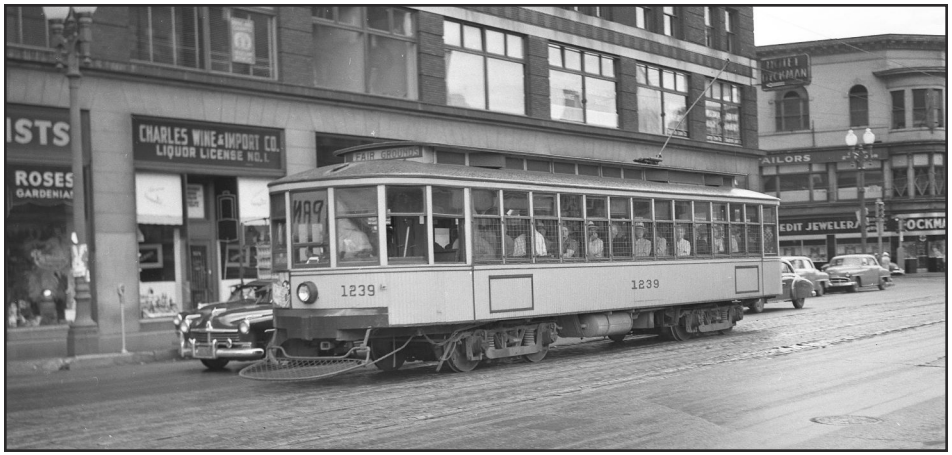
Like all the standard cars, 1239 was originally designed to require a two-person crew. The motorman was isolated on the front platform behind a bulkhead with a closed pocket door. The conductor handled all interactions with the passengers, who entered and left through wire gates in the rear.

Boarding and alighting passengers through the rear created congestion and crowding on the back platform, which in turn caused delay and increased operating expenses. Double length longitudinal (aisle facing) seats in the rear of the car created more standing room, but it wasn't enough. As an experiment, car 1310 was modified with separate entrance and exit streams through the rear platform, divided by a railing that channeled the passengers through separated doors in the rear bulkhead. That also didn't reduce congestion enough, so in 1920 TCRT decided to install front exit doors to create a one-way flow though the cars. The new doors were installed on the newest cars first, 328 of them from 1920 to 1928. The last group included car 1300. Being an older car, 1239 was not among them and remained as originally built.

Ridership losses throughout the 1920s caused TCRT to consider eliminating conductors on more lightly traveled lines. The guinea pigs for one-man operation were the lightweight cars built in 1925 and 1927. The next step was to test the concept on standard cars. In 1931 car 1854, the newest in the fleet, and car 1328, one of the older cars, were selected. TCRT tried retaining the manually operated gates, but the final design called for air operated double-stream doors front and rear. The end result is what you see today with car 1300, which was part of the first group so rebuilt in late 1931. Car 1239 was completed in 1935 and the program ended in 1936.



As built, 1239 looked like this. The basic yellow and green color scheme was the same, but the silver striping and silver outlined numbers disappeared in 1920. It was rebuilt for 1-man, 2-man operation in 1935, and thereafter looked the same as 1300.



Car 1239 looked like this after 1935, running as a Fairgrounds special at 6th and Hennepin, (Norman Rolfe photo) and at the Ford Plant loop. Don Ross photo.

The starting point

When we got car 1239 in late 1987, its body was identical to car 1300. It was moved into the Jackson Street Roundhouse in January 1988 and work began to strip the body. From the beginning the plan was to backdate it to its original gate car configuration. After a year or so the work stalled and didn't resume for ten years.

There are no further progress reports on 1239 until the Spring 1998 issue of the museum's Minnegazette magazine. It says "MTM has been accumulating parts for years and all of the major mechanical components are on hand." That's when it first men-

tions acquiring the bulkhead and doors from Duluth car #195 at Mahtowa.

On November 24, 1998, 1239 was moved to the new Excelsior carbarn. Another development made it possible to restart the restoration. The trucks from Osaka, Japan had arrived. The decision was made to place a pair of them under car 265, freeing up the kit-bashed Chicago L car trucks from 265 to go under 1239.

Above: The cabin storm windows were still on the car when 1239 arrived at the Jackson Street Roundhouse in 1988. While there the body was stripped but the restoration stalled.
Below: The 1239 finally found a home with the opening of the Excelsior Streetcar Line in 1998.

Ken Albrecht replicated a controller cover.

Gathering parts

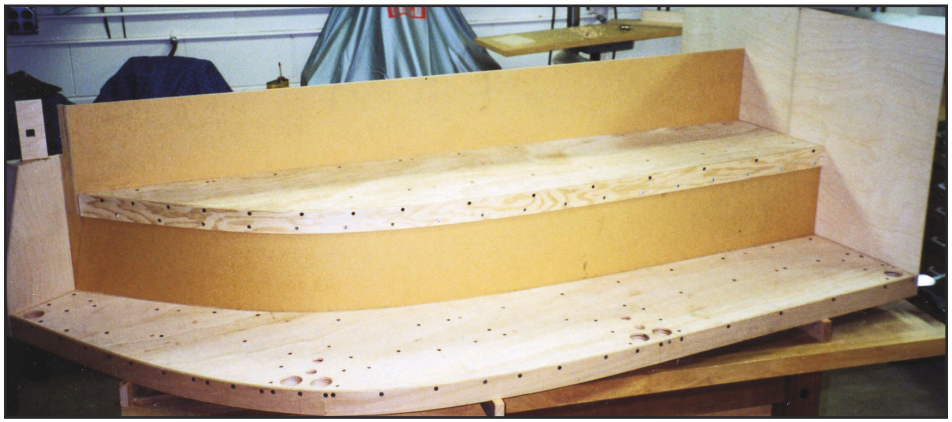
To create a gate car, we needed rear gates. They came from the body of car 1268, which had been parked for a long time on the grounds of Sacred Heart Catholic School in Robbinsdale, thanks to the priest being a trolley fan.

Gate cars had a completely different rear door opening and stepwell, compared to the rebuilt 1-man, 2-man cars. It was wider, with one fewer right rear window. The stepwell was a curved, open steel grid. Replicating the steps was a major challenge, as described by Bill Graham in the Minnegazette.

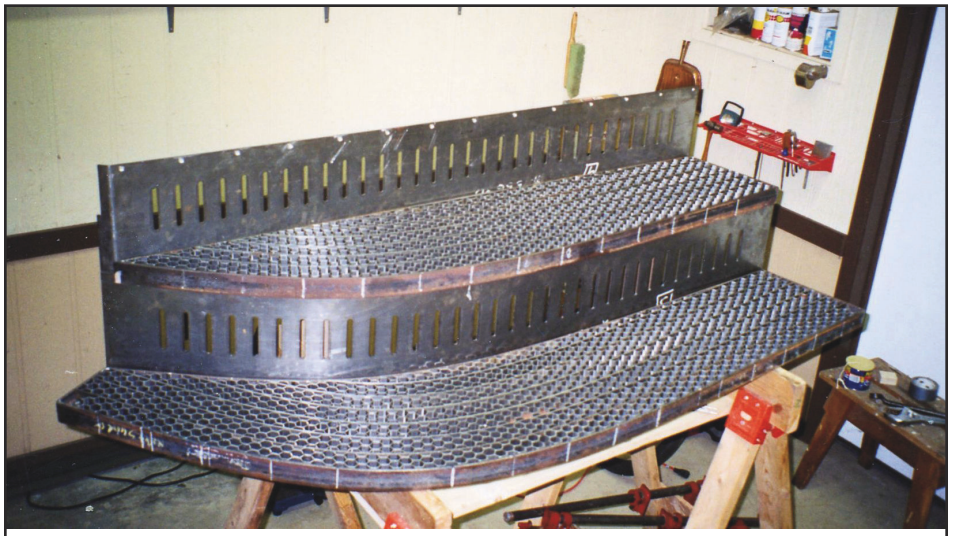
"The only notable snag was the replication of the rear boarding steps. The group had only partial specifications on how the steps were designed, and the old company photos raised more questions than they answered.

Ken Albrecht, retired technical school instructor, thought he knew how to build steps. After taking measurements, he built a plywood mock-up of the steps. Then came the trickiest part—replicating the hexagonal-shaped open steel tread pattern that allowed dirt and snow to fall directly through the step onto the street below.

Ken made a jig on which to bend 14 gauge steel strips into a continuous pattern of half hexagons. The first jig failed, so



Ken Albrecht's step mockup.



Replicating the metal step grids was not easy, because each curve had a different radius. Ken Albrecht used a gaggle of vice grips to overpower the springy steel strips and hold them in place. Above is the end result.
Below: Note the gate linkage and the mailbox rack to the left of the gates.

Backdating 1239 required replacing the bulkheads and pocket doors at the front and rear of the passenger compartment. Thankfully, volunteers were able to harvest the bulkheads and motorman's door from Duluth car #195, an exact sister to 1239.

Ken made a second one that did the job. The bending was accomplished by Alvin Kuhn, owner of Amco Machine in Elysian, MN.

While the strips were being krinkled, Ken bent and welded an angle iron frame that matched the tread surface of his mock up step. This frame formed the bed into which Ken laid the crinkled steel strips to form two lines of hexagonal open step tread. Between each double pair, he placed a straight steel spacer. These stiff, springy strips had to be worried into position using dozens of vice grip pliers and bar clamps to force it around the curve of the step."

The other major challenge was refitting the car with front and rear bulkheads with pocket doors. Bill Graham once again from the Minnegazette: *"I noticed while touring the Lake Superior North Shore that the carbody of Duluth Street Railway #195 still resided in the town of Mahtowa, south of Carlton. By a very lucky coincidence, the owners, Como Oil Company in Duluth, told us the car was to be demolished that week and that we could remove parts for the #1239 restoration. I returned to Mahtowa the following week to salvage parts.*

#195 was a G-class car identical to 1239. She had never been modernized and retained her original front and rear bulkheads and cab configuration. These are features few have ever seen in person. The 195 showed us how the motorman's door was framed, the spacing of the posts forward of the doorway, and the location of operator's appliances in the car such as the gate mechanism and sand box.

We were able to salvage the entire rear bulkhead with two sliding doors and hardware, most of the front bulkhead with its single sliding door, the forward post from the motorman's access door, and the lower interior panels and window sash showing post spacing, screw holes and shadows of appliances formerly installed there."

A gentleman from northern Minnesota owned the body of car 1215 and offered the chance to strip parts. According to Bill, *"We tallied a dozen or so window sashes, a small mountain of window guide strips, facings and bulkhead parts, platform paneling, a nearly complete*

Duluth car 189 was part of the same series as 1239 and parts donor Duluth 195.

set of cane seats in excellent condition, a handhold and various brackets, plus a coffee can of brass screws. We liberated a headlight and backup control box, and found the brake valve moved as if it had just been lubricated." On a second trip they retrieved the hand brake rod, foot gong, and the seat bases.

About the same time Bill Olsen donated a complete conductor's stand with farebox and small hardware items. Later Mary Ann Corbey donated a fare register, conductor signal bells and retriever.

The original backdating changes

Inside the passenger compartment, here are the differences from a rebuilt car like 1300. Because of the crowding in the rear half of a gate car, the rear of the compartment has double-length longitudinal (aisle facing) bench seats to create a wider aisle. The transverse (forward facing) seats extend all the way to the front bulkhead. The seats are clear varnished instead of painted in a cream color. The floor has a natural finish instead of being painted.

The other big differences are lighting and ceiling finishes. Car 1300 has a white, compressed paper ceiling with light fixtures down the center of the ceiling. In car 1239 that was replaced by thin plywood stained to a natural wood color outlined in red striping. The light fixtures are mounted on the side walls above the windows.

The initial restoration did not include window shades. New shades on vintage rollers were made and installed in 2014.

The front platform, now separated from the passenger compartment by the bulkhead from car 195, saw some major changes. The front steps and air operated doors were replaced with a flat floor and a single hinged motorman's door, accessed from the outside by a stirrup step and grab irons. The controller is shifted toward the center and the front window is no longer fixed. It can be lowered into the wall pocket. Instead of the row of door control buttons, there's a large handle to open and close the gates. A large wheel is turned to set the parking brake instead of the ratchet handle on 1300. There is no windshield wiper.

The front of the car received a different, wider front bumper.

Contrast the passenger compartment before and after the 1930s conversion to 1-man, 2-man configuration. The varnished floor has been painted. The seats are rearranged, moving half of the longitudinal (aisle facing) seats to the front of the car. The ceiling's natural wood finish with red outlining is now plain white and the lights are moved from the side walls to the center of the ceiling. Those two changes made it possible to reduce the number of light fixtures by half, including eliminating the six that illuminated the three destination signs.

Backdating 2.0

Once it was determined that 1239 would need new trucks, it was decided to move the car to Lake Harriet and send car 265 to Excelsior. That happened in 2018. With 1239 out of service, it was an opportunity to rethink exactly how it should look. We settled on 1921, rather than the original look from 1907.

There are reasons for that decision. From 1907 until about 1920, the car's yellow exterior featured gold leaf striping and gold-outlined numbers. We had restored it in the 1920 simplified colors without gold leaf, but painted the motorman's door yellow

with gold outlining. That anachronism was corrected by painting the motorman's door the post-1920 solid forest green with olive frames on either side.

A larger, early headlight was substituted for the smaller later headlight of the original restoration. As part of rewiring the lights, they were replaced with vintage-looking LEDs.

The streetcars lacked fareboxes before 1920. 1239 has a farebox, a necessity for museum service, so that was another reason to select the 1921 version of the car.

When Karl Jones took down the ceiling last year to rewire the lights, he noticed what appeared to be the location of additional light fixtures. Checking historic photos, we discovered there were six additional fixtures, two behind each of the three destination signs. They have been installed.

That explains TCRT's thinking when they rebuilt the cars in the 1930s. The white ceiling reflects light much better than the darker natural wood finish. Centering the lights on the white ceiling instead of on the walls provides the same level of illumination with half the number of light fixtures, 8 versus 16. Smart move.

Car 1239 was built with a Baker heater, but none was available when the car was originally restored. That changed in 2018. I was walking through a passenger car at the Strasburg Rail Road in Pennsylvania, looked inside a closet and saw a Baker heater. I asked a staffer where it came from and was told that they manufacture replicas in their own shop. We hired them to build us one for 1239 and it was installed in 2021. Because the heater powered a hot water system, which we also have in cars 265 and Mesaba 10, the shop crew was able to replicate the surge tank and associated plumbing.

The car was built with double stream rear gates. We had only triple stream gates, so that's an inaccuracy we can't correct.

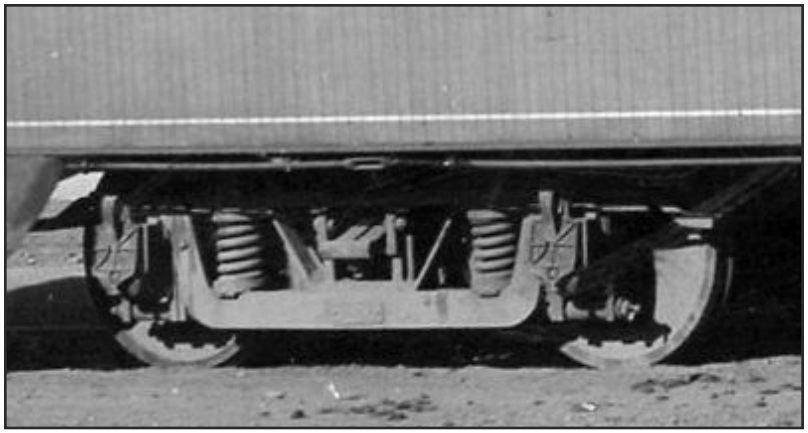
The interior car cards in all of our streetcars are appropriate to when the cars operated, so the 1239 cards were made consistent with the period 1907-1930.

A couple of years ago we acquired three early No. 2 trolley pole retrievers and John Prestholdt restored one of them. It may be a candidate for installation on 1239, although we have photos of the later No. 5 retriever (on the car now)

The 1930s rebuilding changed the front windows. Originally all the lower sashes dropped into wall pockets. After the rebuilding the center pane was fixed and divided at the bottom to mount a windshield wiper motor. The right-hand pane was divided at the bottom to house a rack for the entrance/exit sign. The pane above the Entrance sign was tilted into the car, although it's unclear why. Bob Mehlenbeck photo.

Compare the cab of 1300 (below) with 1239. There's no parking brake wheel, gate handle or wood stool. The center and right windows are fixed and can no longer be opened. Added is the farebox and cushioned stool with an adjustable back. Note that the controller has been shifted to the left to accommodate the front entrance.

Above: 1239 was initially restored with a yellow motorman's door.
Below: Car 1136 shows the correct post-1920 motorman door colors.



Above: The replica Baker heater.

Below: A Baldwin #5 truck.

before 1920. Either one is probably correct.

Another missing detail is the mailbox rack on the rear of the car next to the gates, standard equipment on all the gate cars until about World War II. TCRT carried closed pouch mail between post offices. Post Office employees would meet the streetcar and lock the closed pouch onto the rack. Another Post Office employee would meet the car at the destination and remove the pouch.

The trucks

1239 was built with Baldwin No. 5 trucks. Later, TCRT began building its own copies. The old trucks under 1239 were created by dropping a pair of ancient motors from the Main Steam Station steeple cab locomotive into unpowered Chicago L car trucks. By 2018 they were worn out and needed to be replaced. The decision was made to replace them with replica Baldwin No. 5s, with new motors and a mix of new and recycled parts. Truck rebuilder Rob Mangels, who had overseen the rebuilding of car 1300's trucks, was hired to lead the project.

Four 1920-vintage motors from Toronto streetcars were purchased and overhauled by L&S Electric in Blaine. Major truck frame components have been cut by Truax Company. All new truck springs have been purchased. The next steps are to make the gears.

One of the trucks has been removed and disassembled. It has been temporarily replace by CTA unpowered L car truck rented from Illinois Railway Museum. That allows the car to be moved . When the first truck is completed, the process will repeat with the second truck.

Pat Peterson's family album

-Aaron Isaacs

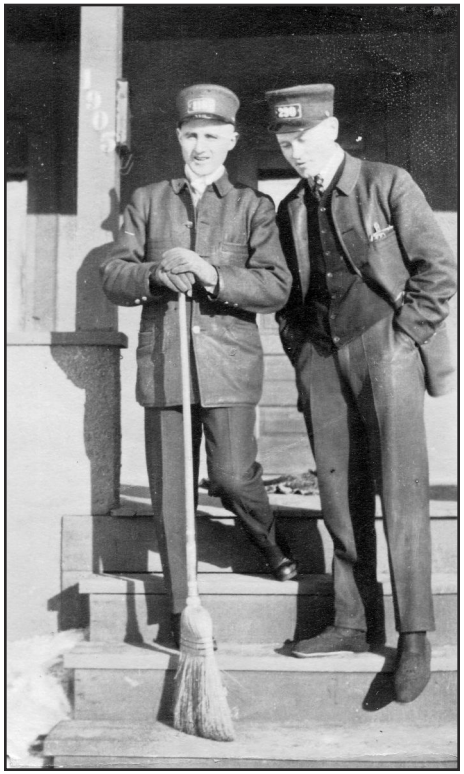
When you have a museum, history often arrives unsolicited. Here's a good example. I recently got an email from John Robinson, former co-owner with Art Pew of the private railcar Gritty Palace, now preserved at the Jackson Street Roundhouse. It was John who donated the George Isaacs memorial plaque on display at the front of the CHSL shop.

John told me to call his friend Pat Peterson, saying she had photos of motormen who were in her family. I met Pat for coffee and she pulled out a pair of photo albums. What unfolded was a story of Norwegian and German immigrants who came to Minneapolis and found careers on the streetcar system. This was typical of so many similar stories that I knew it deserved an article.

Pat's grandfather was Sivert Kvalheim, born in 1891 in Kvalheim, Norway. He immigrated to Minnesota in 1909, along with his cousin Anders Kvalheim, who Americanized his name to Andrew. Andrew hired out as a TCRT conductor in January 1913. Sivert followed in December 1913. According to Pat, the family story is that neither was an eldest son and able to inherit the family farm in Norway. They decided to seek out a better life in America.

Sivert and Andrew shared a house on 19th Avenue NE near Central Avenue with fellow conductor Rudolph (Rudy) Uden, also hired in January 1913. Uden was German. His brother Herman lived with them and also became a conductor in 1917. All four worked at East Side Station, a short streetcar ride from their home.

A violent 1917 streetcar strike (see



Above: Andrew (left) and Sivert Kvalheim.
Below: Andrew Kvalheim

Middle photos: Rudolph Uden (top) and his brother Herman Uden (bottom) shared a bachelor house with the Kvalheim cousins. All worked at East Side Station.
Above: The Kvalheims and Rudolph Uden married the three Ahrens sisters. From right to left are Rudolph Uden, Rose Ahrens, Andrew Kvalheim and Bertha Ahrens.

page 19) had an impact on the careers of these four men. Labor unrest had been growing for some time over long hours, low wages and working conditions. A strike finally happened October 6-9, 1917. It flared up again on December 2, 1917 as a full-fledged riot in St. Paul. From his employee card we know Herman Uden participated in the strike. We also know Sivert Kvalheim resigned on December 3, apparently choosing to neither strike

Both Kvalheims served in the Army during World War I. Here is Sivert with Alma Ahrens about the time they married.

or cross the picket line.

The United States declared war on Germany in April 1917. At some point, both Sivert and Andrew enlisted and went to France, although we don't know for exactly how long. The war ended November 11, 1918. We have photos of them dated 1919 in army uniforms. Andrew's employee appointment card doesn't note an interruption in service, so apparently his job was held for him while he was serving.

Sivert was rehired June 10, 1919. He needed a job, because on July 9, 1919, he and cousin Andrew married sisters Alma and Bertha Ahrens in a double wedding. The Kvalheim's housemate Rudolph Uden had previously married a third sister, Rose Ahrens, thus becoming Sivert's brother-in-law and Pat's great uncle.

The streetcar careers of the four ran the gamut from short to long. Herman Uden last only a year from 1917 to 1918. He was fired for taking a day off without permission. The note on his employment card describes him as "strongheaded", perhaps a reference to his strike involvement.

Andrew Kvalheim switched from conductor to motorman in 1932. In the early 1930s TCRT rebuilt most of its streetcars for one-man operation and laid off many of the conductors who would not switch jobs to become motormen. Despite the large number of layoffs, his seniority saved him. Then in 1938 he transferred from streetcar to driving bus for TCRT subsidiary Twin City Motor Bus. He retired in 1953 with 40 years of service, but died a month later at age 62.

Rudolph Uden also switched from conductor to motorman in 1932. He retired in 1954 with 41 years seniority.

Sivert Kvalheim lasted the longest and rose the highest in the company. Initially hired in 1913, he resigned in 1917, choosing not to participate in the streetcar strike or cross the picket line. He was re-hired in 1919 as a conductor. From there his appointment card lists a series of jobs, which I'll try to explain.

6-10-19 Conductor, East Side Station

5-16-21 Clerk, East Side Station: The clerk was responsible for checking in motormen and conductors and assigning them to runs and streetcars.

7-25-22 Conductor, East Side Station

11-21-22 Starter, Minneapolis: A starter was an on-street supervisor stationed at a particular location to record on-time performance, call for extra service, supervise unscheduled service and shortline late cars if needed to get

Cond.	E.Side	6-10-19
Clerk	E.Side	5-16-21
Cond.	E.Side	7-25-22
Starter	Mpls.	11-21-22
Cond.	E.Side	6-4-24
Starter	Mpls.	11-1-25

REMARKS TO BE FILLED IN BY STATION FOREMAN WHEN DRIVER LEAVES SERVICE

Insp.	Mpls.	2-16-26
Cond.	E.Side	10-1-32
M/M	E.Side	8-1-33
Clerk	E.Side	12-1-39
Night Foreman	E.Side	3-19-40
Superv.	Mpls.	2-4-48
Insp.	Mpls.	12-15-51

Above: Sivert's employee appointment card lists his different jobs from 1919 to 1957.

Below: Sivert on the telephone inside the State Fair office streetcar. John Humiston photo.

Above: Sivert with his new supervisor car, probably in 1953.

Below: Sivert and Rose at his 1957 retirement dinner, held inside the TCRT office building at 11th and Hennepin. He's seated next to General Superintendent Luther Bakken.

the line back on schedule.

6-4-24 Conductor, East Side Station

11-1-25 Starter, Minneapolis

2-16-26 Inspector, Minneapolis: Worked as a starter, but oversaw other starters.

10-1-32 Conductor, East Side Station: This demotion probably happened due to service cuts and layoffs during the Great Depression. Kvalheim had enough seniority to keep his job, but not as a supervisor.

8-1-33 Motorman, East Side Station: Like his brother-in-law Rudy Uden, Kvalheim switched from conductor to motorman when TCRT drastically reduced the number of conductors due to the Depression.

12-1-39 Clerk, East Side Station: Kvalheim starts working his way back up the promotional ladder.

3-19-40 Night Foreman, East Side Station: Each carbarn had a Day and a Night Foremen, responsible for running the operating (non-maintenance) side of the carbarn.

2-4-48 Supervisor, Minneapolis: In charge of Minneapolis on-street operations. Reporting to him were 4 starters, 4 inspectors, 5 mobile street supervisors in autos, 10 flagmen and 7 off-board part-time fare collectors.

12-15-51 Inspector, Minneapolis

He retired in 1957 with 40 years of seniority.

Pre-strike working conditions

Heading into World War I, the 6-day work week with 10-hour days was standard industrial practice, including at TCRT.

Trainmen (motormen and conductors) frequently worked their daily 10 hours as split shifts, with the last shift ending 13-14 hours after the first shift. For example, the first shift might run from 6 to 8 am, the second shift from 12 to 8 pm. Crews often began or ended their shifts with an on-line relief at a location away from the carbarn. Travel between the carbarn and the relief point was unpaid, often adding another 30 minutes of unpaid time to their day.

Conductors had to front the cost $5 of change at the start of each run. Back at the carbarn at the end of the shift they had to spend additional unpaid time accounting for every penny of fares they received, as well as the transfers they gave out. Was it worthwhile to go home between the shifts for lunch, or just hang around the carbarn?

Until the 1920s, trainmen weren't allowed to sit down on the job. Until the 1930s they had to wear their heavy topcoats even during the summer. It didn't help that trainmen had to pay for their uniforms and watches.

Some employees had it even worse, and that undoubtedly contributed to the 1917 strike. Here are some footnotes from a June 1916 TCRT statement of the number of employees.

In the Electric Line Department that maintained the overhead wires, everyone worked every second or third Sunday in addition to their six regular days a week.

The power plant engineers, firemen and operators worked seven days a week with one day off each month. They also alternated between day shift and night shift every other month.

In the station (carbarn) shops the employees worked seven days a week, except for Saturday afternoons in the summer.

The Lake Minnetonka steamboat crews worked seven days a week during the 4 ½ month boat season.

The 1917 Streetcar Strike

-From Wikipedia.

Editor's note: This is the first time we've run a Wikipedia article in Twin City Lines, but this article is open source and is an excellent description of the strike.

On October 26, 1917, strikers intentionally derailed a streetcar at Maryland Avenue, end of the Dale Street line. The police have responded. St. Paul Pioneer Press photo.

The 1917 Twin Cities streetcar strike was a labor strike involving streetcar workers for the Twin City Rapid Transit Company (TCRT) in the Minneapolis–Saint Paul metropolitan area. The initial strike lasted from October 6 to 9, 1917, though the broader labor dispute between the streetcar workers and the company lasted for several months afterwards and included a lockout, a sympathetic general strike, and months of litigation before ending in failure for the strikers.

The labor dispute began in August 1917, when streetcar workers began to openly discuss their grievances regarding their poor working conditions and low pay. Wages had not kept pace with World War I inflation. In September, the workers met with Horace Lowry, the president of the company, to discuss possible wage increases and changes to working conditions, though Lowry resisted both. As a result, the workers organized with the International Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees, which established two local unions in the Twin Cities. Lowry responded by firing several union employees and offering remaining employees a ten percent wage increase, though they rejected the offer because it would not have included the rehiring of those employees. Fearing a possible labor strike, the Civic and Commerce Association, Minneapolis' employers' organization, mobilized the Civilian Auxiliary, an auxiliary group they had formed at the beginning of the United States's entry into World War I earlier that year.

On October 6, the streetcar workers went on strike, which went relatively peacefully in Minneapolis, but became violent in nearby Saint Paul, where a mob of about 3,000 people roamed the streets and committed acts of violence and property damage against both TCRT and non-TCRT owned property. The violence became so bad that Minnesota Governor Joseph A. A. Burnquist mobilized the state's home guard. On October 9, the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety (MCPS, a watchdog organization formed by the state government during the war) became involved, bringing an end to the strike as they mandated that the company institute improved working conditions and pay increases while they reviewed the terminations on a case-by-case basis.

While the union claimed a partial victory with the strike, the company soon after began to plan ways to damage the union. They created a company union whose members often engaged in confrontations with amalgamated union employees, prompting the streetcar union to request the MCPS to intervene again. The MCPS organized a committee to address both sides' grievances and ultimately found in favor of the company, ruling that the

union could not solicit or propagandize on company property, such as with wearing buttons advocating for the union. Taking advantage of the ruling, the company committed a lockout of about 800 union employees on November 25, further inflaming tensions.

On December 2, a pro-labor rally at Saint Paul's Rice Park in support of the streetcar workers turned violent and resulted in a mob of about 2,500 damaging property in the city, and around the same time, labor leaders in the Twin Cities announced plans for a general strike. This general strike, which involved about 10,000 workers, was held on December 13 and was called off after less than four hours when it was announced that federal mediators would become involved in the streetcar labor dispute. The mediators found in favor of the union, but the company refused to obey their recommendations, which the mediators were powerless to enforce, and the union, which had previously agreed to a no-strike clause, was powerless to protest. After several months of litigation stretching into 1918, the labor dispute ended in failure for the union.

Following World War I, the Civilian Auxiliary and the MCPS would be disbanded. It would take until 1934 for employees of the TCRT to become unionized under the banner of the Amalgamated Transit Workers Union. The company would continue operations until 1970, when its assets were absorbed by Metro Transit. Discussing the strike in a 2001 book, historian Mary Lethert Wingerd said, "I think it's one of the most important events in the history of Minnesota, and one of the least recognized". Wingerd states that the strike exposed the federal government's limited power in addressing local labor disputes and resulted in later changes at the national level to address this. Additionally, the strike, which was supported by the Nonpartisan League, resulted in closer collaboration between organized labor and agricultural interests, contributing to the formation of the Minnesota Farmer–Labor Party the following year.

Labor organizing amongst the streetcar workers

Conductors and motormen for the company during this time experienced poor working conditions, working up to 12-hour shifts with no paid time off. As a result, starting in August 1917 and continuing into September, workers began to hold talks with labor union activists and pushed for a wage increase of $0.03 per hour. In September, a committee of streetcar workers met with Lowry and company management to demand increased wages and improved working conditions, though Lowry denied these requests, citing inadequate revenue that could not cover the increased costs. After this, many of the workers sought assistance from the Minneapolis Trades and Labor Assembly, the local trades council. On September 23, 32 workers held a meeting to discuss unionizing. Many unions during this time were taking advantage of the general nationwide labor shortage caused by the U.S. involvement in World War I by pushing for higher wages, better working conditions, and union recognition. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a radical anticapitalist union that had regional headquarters in downtown Minneapolis, was one such organization, and many employees who had pushed for the wage increases and better working conditions had ties to the group. By September 25, Lowry had discovered the identity of 20 of the 32 men who had participated in the union meeting on September 23 and immediately fired them. This incensed many of the workers, and on October 1, about 400 workers held a meeting to discuss the situation with the company and decided to fully unionize with the International Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees, a union for streetcar employees, whose organizers established two local unions for the streetcar workers in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Around the same time, Lowry attempted to counter the growing labor movement in his company by offering a ten percent wage increase to remaining employees, though this offer was rejected because it would not have included the rehiring of the fired men. At the same time, Lowry fired another 37 workers for union activities. Alongside this one of the fired union workers was attacked by a foremen with another non-union employee holding him down. This was after he demanded the pay from his last week of work before being discharged. With no progress in negotiating with Lowry, the streetcar workers began to prepare for a labor strike. It would not be the first in the history of the Twin Cities streetcar system, as in 1889, workers for the Minneapolis Street Railway Company (a predecessor of the TCRT) went on strike over a wage decrease.

Early strike actions

The strike began at 1:00 a.m. CT on Monday, October 6. Sheriff Langum was quickly notified and he ordered the Civilian Auxiliary to be mobilized, under the field leadership of Colonel Harrison and Major Henry Adams Bellows. These two set up headquarters in a room in the Minneapolis Courthouse and began to assign companies to different areas of Minneapolis to defend streetcar employees and property, including their four carbarns. Later in the day, a group of about 150 union supporters gathered around North Side Station at the intersection of Washington Avenue and 24th Avenue N. and attempted to convince working employees to join the strike. However, the streetcars continued to operate on a normal schedule and, aside from some rock-throwing, the gathering was largely peaceful. Later that day, a group of about 100 union sympathizers marched to the carbarn with weapons such as clubs and stones, though they were quickly dispersed by the auxiliary, who were equipped with rifles. One of the group leaders was arrested and charged with inciting a riot. Over the next four days, the auxiliary remained on patrol and, aside from some sporadic incidents at this station, the strike was relatively peaceful in Minneapolis.

In Saint Paul, the strike was much more violent, owing in large part to the strong influence that organized labor held over the city politics. For several hours after the start of the strike, a mob of about 3,000 strikers moved through the streets and committed acts of property damage, such as smashing windows and attacking operating streetcars. The St. Paul Pioneer Press reported during the strike, "Wild rioting in which the police were unable to control mobs numbering in the thousands marked the end of the first day of the street car strike", while Minnesota historian Mary Lethert Wingerd later stated, "the situation had escalated into a full-scale riot, like nothing St. Paul had ever seen".

As a result, by 11 p.m., the company decided to temporarily shut down operations in Saint Paul. The Saint Paul Police Department, whose officers were unionized, was hesitant to suppress the riot. In Minneapolis,

Sheriff Langum posted guards at all of the bridges connecting the two cities to prevent the spread of violence from Saint Paul. The violence was so great that Governor Burnquist ordered in federal soldiers from Fort Snelling to quell the rioting. In total, about 500 troops from several units of the Minnesota Infantry were brought in to restore order. In total, 11 men were arrested, while 20 were injured during the rioting. According to Wingerd, the rioting, which had begun as a labor dispute between the workers and streetcar company, had quickly taken the form of a "community protest" that involved many Saint Paulites airing various grievances, including from several uniformed soldiers who participated, and the local St. Paul Daily News described the event as having the atmosphere of "a state fair", noting the presence of vendors selling popcorn and peanuts. On October 8, Lowry purchased a full-page advertisement in the Saint Paul Dispatch in an attempt to garner public sympathy against the strike, saying, "a small group of men, outside of our organization, have, for political and personal advantage, attempted to create discord between you and your management. ... Can we for a moment either as employees charged with a public duty, or as joint workers in a great industry entrust our interests to these men?" The Pioneer Press also attempted to portray the event as the result of outside agitators, in particular IWW activists.

By October 9, the MCPS decided to intervene and brought an end to the strike. The commission ordered an immediate end to the strike and the reinstatement of fired workers while they began an investigation into the strike that included interviews with numerous union and company representatives. The MCPS reviewed each termination on a case-by-case basis and by October 12, all but 13 of the 57 fired employees had their jobs back. By that date, sporadic violence in Saint Paul had completely died down. The union claimed a victory in this strike action, as the company agreed to an MCPS order to increase pay (resulting in a wage increase of ten percent) and improve working conditions, prompting the pro-labor Minneapolis Labor Review to report in an October 12 headline story, "Street Railway Strike Ends in Victory for Men".

Interim

Following this initial strike action, Lowry and company management remained fearful of future union actions and decided to create a company union called the Trainmen's Cooperative and Protective Association. This association, with Lowry as its head, was designed to counter the influence of the union and gave Lowry arbitration power over the members. The association distributed buttons to its members, though this backfired as the union began to issue buttons of its own and increased recruitment efforts. At one carbarn, about 160 employees left the association and joined with the union. Tensions escalated between the two groups of workers, and daily instances of harassment, verbal abuse, and in some cases even physical violence were not uncommon. On November 1, the union sent an appeal to the MCPS, which ordered all hostilities to cease as they assembled a committee to address both sides' grievances. The committee initially consisted of President Samuel F. Kerfoot of Hamline University, Minneapolis lawyer Robert Jamison, and Saint Paul businessman Norman Fetter, though Jamison was later replaced by CCA member Waldron M. Jerome after it was revealed that Jamison owned stock in TCRT. According to Millikan, this committee, which began holding hearings on November 7, was biased towards the union, and there were rumors that Fetter also owned stock in TCRT and that Hamline University had received a financial endowment from Horace Lowry. While this committee continued to hold hearings, both the company and the union prepared for the next labor dispute. Edward Karow, a captain in the Minneapolis Civilian Auxiliary, traveled to Saint Paul to organize an auxiliary force in that city, arming them with several hundred riot sticks and some rifles. The union complained to Governor Burnquist that the auxiliary was in essence nothing more than a private army for employers and was illegally wearing United States Army clothing and brandishing rifles. While the union wanted the auxiliary disbanded, the only change to come from this was that the group began to wear steel-gray uniforms instead of their previous khaki ones.

On November 19, the committee released its recommendations, which included a ban on button-wearing by the streetcar workers and the prohibition of the union to solicit and propagandize on company property, which included the carbarns and the streetcars. The MCPS adopted the committee's recommendations in full the following day, with the company given the ability to enforce the recommendations. While both the company and the union had agreed to the button recommendation, the union had not agreed to the ban on soliciting and propagandizing, and after discussing the matter with the MCPS, the union agreed to hold a vote on November 26. However, the company learned of the planned vote and on November 25 ordered that anyone seen wearing a button or soliciting would be fired immediately. This resulted in a lockout of about 800 union members who had refused to comply with the company's demands, and the union viewed the move as an effort by the company to break the union. These 800 men would later be fired by the company. While the union contended that the recommendations did not carry the force of law and were thus unenforceable by the company, the MCPS, which supported the company, passed an order on November 27 that gave the recommendations the force of law, though the order also stipulated that the 800 men would be rehired. However, the union still refused to comply. That same day, the CCA reorganized the Minneapolis division of the American Protective League (APL), an organization nominally under the direction of the United States Department of Justice's Bureau of Investigation whose goal was to employ surveillance on certain groups during the war. Approximately 400 members of the CCA joined the APL, which was headquartered in the local federal building.

Pro-labor riot in Saint Paul

On December 2, tensions came to a head during a pro-union rally at Saint Paul's Rice Park that had been organized by labor groups in the Twin Cities. After the rally, despite calls by labor leader speakers to engage in peaceful demonstrations, a large group of people (later reported by the Pioneer Press as about 2,500) took to Saint Paul's streets and began to damage TCRT company property and attack nonunion streetcar workers. The actions caused the company to

suspend afternoon operations in the city and resulted in about 50 nonunion streetcar workers getting injured.

Ramsey County Sheriff John Wagener refused to offer protection to the streetcar company and the Saint Paul Police Department was unable to restore order, prompting the deployment of the Minnesota Home Guard at 6:00 p.m. Within two hours, the Home Guard had dispersed crowds from downtown Saint Paul and had erected barricades in certain areas of the city.

Over the next several days, additional troops arrived from across the state, from cities such as Austin, Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Red Wing. Governor Burnquist later removed Sheriff Wagener from his post due to his inaction, and though labor activists gathered 20,000 signatures calling for his reinstatement, this did not occur. In Minneapolis, Sheriff Langum mobilized the Civilian Auxiliary shortly after rioting broke out in Saint Paul. These men patrolled the streets in weather that dropped to as low as -25 degrees Fahrenheit and engaged in some sporadic scuffles with union members, but were able to prevent the widespread rioting that Saint Paul experienced. During this conflict, the Northwestern National Bank donated 66 .30 caliber rifles with bayonets to the auxiliary. Local media would later call this act of violence "The War of St. Paul". In the aftermath, two speakers at the Rice Park rally, including James Manahan of the Nonpartisan League, who had pledged that group's support for the strikers, were arrested for inciting a riot, though these charges were later dismissed by a judge in Ramsey County.

One labor newspaper's account of the secondary riot in Minneapolis was as follows. The paper claims that the actions and presence of the Civilian Auxiliary, armed with pick handles as rudimentary clubs and pistols, provoked it. That they prodded workers with the handles and the prevented people from crossing street corners, leading fights to break out. It then concludes that at the end of the night a couple of street car windows were broken and no one was injured except those beaten by the Civilian Auxiliary. Another labor newspaper, The Minnesota Union Advocate, claims the streetcars' power was shut down right before an outside meeting ended.

Above: This appears to be the streetcar employees entering the St. Paul Auditorium on December 11, 1917 to take the strike vote. Opposite: Troops assemble outside the Auditorium during the strike vote. St. Paul Pioneer Press photos.

Plans for a general strike

While the violence had been quelled in the Twin Cities, a national gathering of union members scheduled for December 5 prompted fears of a general strike in the metropolitan area. As a result, on December 4, United States Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, acting United States Secretary of Labor Louis F. Post, American Federation of Labor (AFL) president Samuel Gompers, and MCPS representative C. W. Ames met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the situation in the Twin Cities. The group decided that the best course of action to prevent a full-scale general strike was to suspend the MCPS and reopen the case between the streetcar company and the union. Secretary Baker notified Governor Burnquist that the federal government was willing to intervene to prevent more disturbances, as they believed that a continued labor dispute in the cities could hurt the country's war effort. McGee and the CCA were afraid that federal government intervention would hurt the organization's position of power in the Twin Cities and McGee notified both Secretary Baker and United States Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo that their intervention was unwarranted. Governor Burnquist also resisted intervention and Secretary Baker opted to put these plans on hold for the time being.

On the morning of Wednesday, December 5, about 15,000 unionists met at the Saint Paul Auditorium and heard speeches from notable labor activists, including Mayor Van Lear. The unionists pledged their support to the streetcar union members and demanded the firing of both McGee and Charles W. Ames from the MCPS.

Additionally, they voted to wait until December 11 for federal intervention, vowing to gather again and vote on a general strike if intervention had not occurred by that time. In a bid to show he was not antilabor, Governor Burnquist fired Ames, though kept McGee on the commission. Several days later, on December 7, APL members learned through espionage that some machinist union members were planning a possible statewide general strike. A general strike in the Twin Cities was officially declared to begin at 10:00 a.m. on December 13. The union stated that they expected 30,000 people to go on strike, prompting fears that martial law would be declared. Governor Burnquist ordered that all liquor stores be closed and instructed the sheriffs of both Hennepin and Ramsey counties to maintain order. By noon, over 10,000 people had walked out of their jobs. By that time, Secretary Baker, acting under the authority of United States President Woodrow Wilson, telegraphed William Bauchop Wilson of the President's Mediation Commission to investigate the developments in the Twin Cities, citing a "federal interest" in the matter. Having achieved their goal of federal intervention, at 1:30 p.m., E. G. Hall, the president of the Minnesota chapter of the AFL, called off the strike. In total, this general strike had lasted less than four hours, with no reports of violence. Governor Burnquist, while agreeing to meet with federal mediators, voiced stern opposition to the federal government's decision, calling it an overreach of their power.

Federal mediation and the end of the dispute

The mediators held their inquiries at the Radisson Hotel in Minneapolis and heard testimony from representatives of many of the involved organizations, including the streetcar company, the unions, the CCA, the MCPS, and other politicians. Additionally, before departing to Washington, D.C. to complete their investigation, the mediators had the unions sign an agreement not to strike. According to Millikan, the decision by the unions to agree to not strike severely damaged the union members chances at winning this labor conflict, as, according to Millikan, "The unions refused to believe the obvious: Lowry and the [MCPS] fully intended to ignore any federal intervention". While the mediators continued their investigations into January, the TCRT began to recruit nonunion workers from rural areas outside of the Twin Cities, while the CCA established an employment bureau to help find more workers.

On February 14, 1918, the mediators released their recommendations, which stated that the streetcar company should rehire all union workers at prestrike wages and should not discriminate based on union membership. Secretary Baker requested the MCPS to urge the company to comply with the recommendations, but Lowry responded that compliance "would be imposing a gross injustice" on nonunion members. With the federal mediators powerless to enforce their recommendations and the MCPS unwilling to force the company to comply, the company remained steadfast in their refusal to rehire union members. J. H. Walker, a member of the mediation commission, wrote that, "The company has positively refused to agree to the findings of the commission. ... They have thus put themselves squarely on record in opposition to the war policies of our government at this time".

Despite a campaign by labor activists in the state, the MCPS remained steadfast in opposition to forcing compliance, and on April 16, they issued an order to establish an industrial status quo, hurting the development of union activities in the state. In accordance with the order, on June 12, the Minnesota Board of Arbitration attempted to mediate between the company and the union, but the company refused to enter into any form of discussions with the union. Despite this, the Board of Arbitration agreed with the findings of the presidential mediators, and the union then requested that the dispute be handled by the newly created National War Labor Board (NWLB). However, on April 10, 1919, the NWLB dismissed the case, thus finally ending the streetcar labor dispute in the Twin Cities.

The intersection of 2nd Avenue S. and 7th Street in downtown Minneapolis is busy in late August ca1928. The streetcar is on the Chicago-Penn-Fremont line and will turn right onto 8th Street in another block. The bus, also owned by TCRT, is running the Como Avenue express route to St. Paul and is carrying a State Fair dash sign. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

PO Box 16509
Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
www.TrolleyRide.org

August 2021

Pursuant to board action at the August 5, 2021 meeting of the board of directors and in honor of the 50th anniversary of operation of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line the attached materials are being republished by the Minnesota Streetcar Museum under the under the Creative Commons "Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International" and "Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported" licenses. You may choose either license as suited for your needs. In particular, the 3.0 license is meant to be compatible with the Wikipedia project.

In general, these licenses will allow you to freely:

- **Share** — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
- **Adapt** — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

Under the following terms:

- **Attribution** — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
    - **Please credit the *Minnesota Streetcar Museum* and provide our URL *www.trolleyride.org*** We would also appreciate hearing about your re-use of our materials though that is not a requirement of the license.
- **ShareAlike** — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.
- **No additional restrictions** — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation.

No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material.

Please review these licenses at the Creative Commons site for full legal code and details on allowed uses:

- Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International:
    - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode
- Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported
    - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode

If these licenses are not appropriate for your needs, for example you want to use the material commercially without crediting us or do not want to share your contributions under the same license please reach out to us for other options.

We Make Minnesota's Electric Railway History Come Alive!